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ABSTRACT

A review was done of how teacher training programs teach prospective teachers. After searching the literature for research on secondary English methods classes and finding none, the study solicited syllabi from over 300 universities across the country. Syllabi from 81 universities were received. Through analysis of the syllabi the study identified five basic ways in which methods classes are taught: survey, workshop, experience-based, reflective, and theoretical. Though many contained aspects of more than one type, rough distribution among types was: 27 survey, 23 workshop, 8 experience-based, 4 theoretical, 2 reflective, 5 reflective/workshop, 3 reflective/experience-based, 2 workshop with practicum, and 4 other practica. Analysis also led to two general conclusions: (1) the prevalence of the survey course was surprising given that its teaching and learning processes are directly in contrast to the types of teaching and learning espoused in most of the texts used in these courses; and (2) while each approach has its particular strength, the best methods class should be theoretically informed, involve students in some sort of pragmatic teaching experience, provide a workshop atmosphere, and require students to reflect on their own experiences as learners and on the consequences of various teaching approaches. (Contains 15 references.) (JB)

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How Teachers Get Taught: Five Models for Teaching the Secondary English Methods Class

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How Teachers Get Taught: Five Models for Teaching the Secondary English Methods Class

Stephen North (1987), in portraying the way in which many college composition teachers learn their trade, used the term "lore" to describe the informal way in which knowledge is passed along from teacher to teacher. Rather than relying on research findings to inform their work, many composition teachers depend on anecdotal accounts of "what works" with students, with conversations in the staff room, and other practical accounts of real teaching success to illuminate their understanding of how to teach writing.

The role of lore in motivating instruction is no doubt widespread throughout the teaching profession. As far as we can tell, it is the means through which most knowledge of how to teach teachers gets passed along. In an attempt to find any published research on the ways in which students are taught in their secondary English teaching methods class, we conducted an ERIC search combining key words such as "teaching methods," "pre-service education," "syllabus," and "secondary English" and came up empty handed. The lack of any publications or conference papers examining the ways of teaching the methods class confirmed our sense that as a field we have no formal knowledge of how such courses are taught, relying instead on knowledge passed along from colleague to colleague, perhaps during conversations at

conferences, perhaps among colleagues at the same university, perhaps through the exchange of syllabi in the mail.

While serviceable to some professors to some extent, the informal knowledge of lore is not sufficient to help the field get a better understanding of the full range of options available in teaching the methods course. To provide a preliminary understanding of how the methods class is taught in universities across the country, we solicited methods course syllabi from over 300 four-year universities, large and small, regional and research, Hawaii to Maine. From that request we received eighty-one syllabi that formed the basis of our study of the ways in which pre-service teachers learn how to teach secondary English.

After an extensive analysis of the syllabi--including a total of five readings of each, with much discussion in amongst the readings--we identified five basic ways in which the methods class is taught. The categories we identified for course organization were survey, workshop, experience-based, reflective, and theoretical. Next we will draw a composite of each of these five types of course organization, giving typical types of activities and assessments required in each. Of course, in creating composites we are masking the ways in which particular courses varied from the basic structures, often including elements of more than one of the course types we have identified. Our purpose then is not to provide a quinchotomy of mutually exclusive course models, but rather to illustrate how courses

with different focuses can have different implications for the ways in which students learn about teaching.

Table 1 shows how many syllabi of each type we identified. We should stress that our identification of a course in a particular category was not always an obvious decision; at times we would classify a course because it was closer to one category than to another, rather than because it met all of the criteria we had established. As Table 1 reveals some courses had a dual focus and were thus given a dual coding. The frequency with which we identified each type of course, then, should be taken as a rough indicator, rather than a precise figure of the distribution of course organizations in the sample.

Table 1

Survey	27
Workshop	23
Experience-Based	8
Theoretical	4
Reflective	2
Reflective/Workshop	5
Reflective/Experienced-Based	3
Workshop with Practicum	2
Other practica included	4

As Table 1 reveals, some courses included a practicum. We received a total of six syllabi that either included a separate syllabus for a practicum or made reference to a practicum. In that we did not request a practicum syllabus we do not know the extent to which practica are paired with methods courses. Practicum syllabi were not included in the analysis of the organization of syllabi.

Following is a an account of each type of organization we identified in the syllabi, along with illustrations of activities and processes that characterized them. We will start with the most frequent means of organization, the survey.

Five Methods of Course Organization

Survey

Some syllabi identified themselves in their course description as a survey of issues relevant to the teaching of secondary English. We found that many other syllabi took a survey approach as well. A survey course attempted to cover a great many issues and topics during a single semester. One characteristic of a survey course was that the class sessions could be taught in almost any order; the knowledge from one session to another did not build towards a synthesis, but tended to move from topic to topic.

Survey courses often followed the organization of a single textbook, starting out with a historical perspective and then moving on to cover a series of topics in discrete class sessions. Survey courses covered grammar, computers, writing, testing and evaluation, debate, discipline, classroom management, learning styles, objectives, lesson plans, units, the research paper, school law, exceptional learners, multi-ethnic learners, and other topics, with one topic or a cluster of topics covered in a single session. Often the classes were taught by a series of guest speakers, contributing to a sense of separation from class

to class. A survey approach seemed to assume that a student can build knowledge about teaching from parts to whole; that is, that the coverage of a great many issues will result in an aggregate understanding of the whole of teaching.

Often a survey syllabus would begin with a catalogue-style course description and then present the students with a lengthy list of course objectives or outcomes. The list of objectives often extended for up to three single-spaced pages, covering virtually every responsibility a teacher could have in a classroom, school, and professional community. The objectives were usually presented in outline form, stated in fairly technical language. A typical objective from a syllabus was to "Identify directed reading activities appropriate for given reading objectives." Often the objectives referred to goals that were extraordinarily complex and might require a complete reorientation on the part of pre-service teachers, such as "Explain the interdependence needed among the various cultures for the enhancement of learning how to function and learn in a pluralistic society." The content of the class sessions rarely indicated how the course would help the students meet the many and varied objectives and outcomes presented at the beginning of the syllabus.

Survey courses often required students to do a great many brief assignments such as writing lesson plans or reading a series of twenty or so journal articles and preparing abstracts

or an annotated bibliography for them. Often students were required to produce a series of lessons, perhaps one for grammar, one for composition, and one for literature. The lessons appeared to last a single class period or less, in that they were often used as teaching demonstrations during methods course classes. Syllabi usually did not spell out the specifics for the assignments, relying instead on the textbook or supplemental handouts for details of what should be involved.

Survey courses rarely involved extended assignments that required synthesis such as an extended instructional unit. When students were required to write an instructional unit, the unit tended to be short, from five to ten days in length, or of an unspecified length. A survey course would typically include a mid-term and final exam, the contents of which were not revealed in the syllabi. Students were at times required to take quizzes over assigned readings, and on a few syllabi students were tested on either grammar or state-required knowledge. Tests of this sort appeared to be concerned with correctness rather than on synthesizing knowledge.

In a nutshell, surveys attempt to cover all the bases, and in doing so often ended up assessing students on the content of the course readings or on the particular concepts from individual class sessions. A survey course, like survey courses in literature and other fields, attempted to provide a broad introduction to the field of teaching English rather than to

focus on any particular area in depth. In doing so it presented a model of teaching for students that stresses broad coverage of briefly studied, unconnected topics. With the demands of extensive coverage the survey courses rarely provided opportunities for process-oriented learning; there was little evidence of collaborative learning, extended attention to learning processes such as the development of writing or projects over a series of class periods, or the production of projects requiring synthesis of knowledge. Such an approach was often contradictory to the content of the textbooks studied, which typically stressed process-oriented approaches to learning. Of the five types of syllabi we identified, we see surveys as having the least potential for enabling pre-service teachers to learn about teaching. Ironically, though, this was the category of organization we found most frequently, a situation that we hope this report can help change.

Workshop

A workshop consistently devoted class sessions to student participation in the activities they were being taught to teach. A workshop devoted class sessions to the small group development of lesson plans, assessments, prereading activities, and other practical teaching activities. In-class collaborative activities were a central means of learning in a workshop.

A workshop tended to sequence class sessions so that each class developed understandings from prior learning and was

important to the understanding of what followed. There was continuity among classes and a building towards a concrete goal in the form of a major synthesis of understanding from the course in a large project such as the development of an extended instructional unit of 4-6 weeks that incorporated all of the planning strategies learned throughout the course.

The class tended to build from whole to parts; in other words, all assignments and activities were subsumed to the purpose of a larger plan. Literature, composition, grammar, and other topics covered tended to be integrated rather than covered in discrete sessions as happened in survey courses. A workshop was recursive in its approach to teaching instructional design in that it included opportunities for feedback on lessons and units that students were developing. Often the feedback came after a first effort, with students then given further opportunities to use the response to improve their instruction. This type of response seemed most helpful when students were engaged in long planning processes such as the integration of a series of lessons into a larger instructional unit; students could receive extensive and continuous feedback on ideas that they were developing over a period of time, thus making it likely for them to see the connections among the different parts of the unit they were developing. Students were encouraged to take risks and stretch their thinking; as one syllabus informed the students, "Because revision and rereading are essential aspects of writing

and reading, regard all work as in progress."

Often students worked on lessons and units with partners or in small collaborative groups, both in class and in the development of outside projects. Both students and teachers acted as critics of on-going class projects. Students often engaged in teaching demonstrations of lessons they had developed in their workshop activities, with feedback from classmates and their professor. A workshop attempted to move from theory to practice in a "hands-on" fashion with a stress on continuity, feedback, and revision.

One syllabus devoted the second half of each class session to a unit planning workshop in which students would work in groups of 3-4 to plan a comprehensive unit. The workshop portion of the class allowed students to incorporate the particular ideas from the session's reading assignments and class discussions into their larger planning ideas, and to make an immediate connection between a specific idea (such as planning pre-reading activities) and other aspects of instruction. The units developed during the workshop component could be used by the students as practice for their formal units written outside class, or turned in for a grade if the groups of students chose.

A workshop tended to teach students a particular approach to pedagogy. In the myriad of texts assigned to students on the eighty-one syllabi, we identified five major theoretical positions that informed instruction:

1. Student-centered approaches based on the assumption of natural development. This perspective is often associated with such approaches as the whole language movement. Frequently used texts included Atwell's In the Middle, Tchudi and Mitchell's Explorations in the Teaching of English, Tchudi and Tchudi's The English/Language Arts Handbook, and Kirby, Liner, and Vinz's Inside/Out. The authors stress the need for teachers to facilitate, rather than direct, student development, often referring to "natural" learning processes that are stultified or corrupted by teacher interventions. This approach stresses individualized instruction, encouraging the students to have authority and control over the direction of their own learning.

2. Transactional theories of response to literature. Rosenblatt's (1938, 1978) transactional theory is the source of this perspective, which stresses the reader's active involvement with the literary work. Beach and Marshall's Teaching Literature in the Secondary School and Probst's Response and Analysis were the most widely used texts articulating this perspective. While Rosenblatt is usually associated with experiential approaches to reading, she also stresses the importance of attention to the signs offered in the text, the schematic knowledge that readers require for comprehension, the cultural experiences of readers that create meaning for the signs in a text, and the social aspects of learning that affect readers' approaches to the text. She stresses the need for "aesthetic" reading of literature,

which involves a lived-through experience with the literary work, rather than an "efferent" or knowledge-oriented approach to reading.

3. Teacher-directed, activity-based, problem-centered instruction. This approach is different from the first one we identified in that the teacher plays a more direct role in determining the direction of student learning. Lindemann's A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers and Kahn, Walter, and Johannessen's Writing about Literature were often used in teaching this perspective. This perspective draws on cognitive psychology for instructional principles, usually advocating some sort of instructional scaffolding in which a teacher introduces a concept or problem, engages students in (usually collaborative) activities to teach them strategies for solving it, and when students have internalized the procedures evaluates them independently. The pedagogy emerging from this perspective relies on the potential of instruction to accelerate growth rather than assuming that teacher should encourage students to grow "naturally."

4. Sociocultural perspectives on learning. This perspective looks at the ways in which learners' backgrounds affect their opportunities for success in the classroom. Shaughnessy's Errors and Expectations and Zemelman and Daniels's A Community of Writers typify this approach. Theorists in this tradition urge educators to be attentive to the range of cultural

backgrounds that students bring to class and open their minds to ways of talking and constructing meaning that make classrooms more democratic and likely to foster growth and success among all students, not just those whose homes and communities share the same cultural practices as those found in school. Again, the idea of "natural" development is called into question, given the ways in which children of different cultures learn to think differently.

5. Grammar as process. This view questions the idea that formal instruction in grammar contributes to better speaking and writing abilities. Weaver's Grammar for Teachers was the most frequently used book holding this position. The texts underscore the research findings that grammar does not improve writing, and stress the need for more process-oriented approaches such as sentence combining and extended writing for the improvement of grammar and usage. The texts also stress the importance of the deep structure of language rather than the surface structure, and look at the use of dialects as contextually proper forms of discourse rather than "nonstandard" English.

A workshop would tend to teach students a particular way of teaching, often choosing one of these perspectives (or more than one if they were complementary), selecting a series of textbooks (perhaps augmented by articles in a course packet) that presented the position coherently, and providing opportunities for students to experience and learn how to teach in the way advocated by the

textbook authors. Students learning student-centered approaches based on the assumption of natural development, for instance, might read Tchudi and Mitchell's Explorations in the Teaching of English, Atwell's In the Middle, and perhaps Purves, Rogers, and Soter's How Porcupines Make Love II, which offers a complementary view of transactional response to literature. In their course activities students would engage in some of the processes involved in these teaching approaches, such as developing their own personal writing and meeting in small groups for response and revision suggestions.

The following example from a workshop syllabus illustrates how the course attempts to integrate all of the parts of teaching into a coherent whole, using class sessions for collaborative planning and feedback. The text is Explorations in the Teaching of English, and students simultaneously plan instructional units outside class and work on their own personal writing in class.

> Session #6: Planning units. Read Explorations, Chapter 3, and sample unit (in xerox packet).
> Daily exercise: Explorations p.71. Start planning your unit.
> Class: Discussion of criteria for good units (handout on integrated units), rubric for grading unit plans, discussion of your initial plans, evaluation of several units in groups.

Session #7: Skim Explorations, Chapter 4. Read Chapters 5 and 6. Work on unit.
Daily exercise: Explorations, p.108 "Four Case Studies."
Class: Discussion of text; case study discussion; demo lessons on "WOW logs" and LTD.

Session #8: Read Explorations, Chapters 7 and 8. Work on unit. Prepare one page written progress report on your unit project. Focus on questions I can answer for you and problems I can help solve.
Daily exercise: Do a WOW log on these two chapters.
Class: Discussion of the log entries and the chapters, book paths; individual conferences with me on unit plans.

Session #9: Read Explorations, Chapters 9-10 "Writing Strategies Guide" (in xerox packet) pages 1-16 (intro and topics 1-10). Work on unit.
Daily exercise: Explorations "The assignment makers" Study these writing assignments and evaluate them from YOUR point of view. Take notes and be ready to report.
Class: Discussion of reading and assignments; modeling of various prewriting strategies to get your own piece of writing started. Modeling a writing instruction sequence.

Session #10: Read Explorations, 11-12 and "Writing Strategies Guide" pp.17-29 (topics 11-19). Revise on your piece. Work on your unit.
Daily exercise: Keep a journal or log describing all the various mental processes and activities you go through in writing this piece. (What idea you started with, how and when you changed your mind, when you revised, and what you did, etc.).
Class: Discussion of chapters, language interludes and how they should work, DOL, and exercise. Modeling peer review, peer conferences on pieces.

Session #10: Read "Writing Strategies Guide" pp.30-33. Complete your piece and prepare final copy of it. Work on your unit. Bring draft to class.
No daily exercise.
Class: Sharing/publication of pieces, workshop on responding to and grading student writing. Peer revision and editing on unit plan drafts.

Session #11: Complete Unit plan and hand in. In class, review and wrap up; final exam last hour.

As this series of classes illustrates, the workshop attempted to establish continuity from class to class, involving

students in the aspects of learning (i.e., attention to the processes involved in personal writing) that the professor hoped to encourage them to promote among their own students, and coupling that experience with continual work on and revision of their instructional units, which we might gather would include the sort of attention to process modeled in the students' reflection on their developing "pieces." This sequence of classes does not include as much in-class work on planning the instructional unit as some of the other workshops we found, providing one small group planning session in Session #6; it does, however, reveal how the professor used a combination of model instructional units, instruction from the textbook, supplemental handouts on unit design (i.e., the criteria and rubric), in-process progress reports and feedback, and the final sharing of finished products. This series of classes provides a good illustration of the ways in which a workshop can help students synthesize knowledge from a number of different areas and work over time to develop a single, extended project with in-process instruction and feedback from the professor and classmates on its development, with a focus on a particular approach to teaching being emphasized.

Experience-Based

An experience-based course deliberately linked theory and practice, usually through extensive observations of secondary English classrooms and often requiring pre-service teachers to

both plan instruction with and teach in the classes of secondary school teachers. One experience-based course listed as the very first item on its syllabus the following objectives:

> To provide adequate field experience which links theory and practice; to provide a screening mechanism for entrance into student teaching; to introduce undergraduates to public schools and their Language Arts Curricula.

Experience-based classes typically alternated between field experience and regular class sessions, with the regular sessions consisting of discussions of reading assignments, shared observations from field experiences, planning of instruction, and teaching demonstrations.

One experience-based course illustrated well the way in which field experience can make up a central part of the course. The class met for the first three weeks in regular sessions, engaging in the reading and discussion of issues from the course texts. Weeks four through seven were spent in schools in order to give the students, as the syllabus said, "uninterrupted time for observations in the schools. This will allow you to observe several classes a day, 5 days a week, which will give you a somewhat more coherent picture of the teaching than you would otherwise get." Weeks eight and nine marked a return to the classroom where students made presentations on lessons they had developed during their field observations, getting feedback from

the professor and classmates. The final week of the term was devoted to a final exam and wrap-up of the course.

Another syllabus was organized so that it met for regular one-hour sessions in the morning, and then returned for a two-hour "lab" in the afternoon. Each lab session had a specific instructional purpose, such as "lesson planning work sessions," and "microteaching [on] student response to literature." Following ten weeks of this structure the course went into a Practicum; the syllabus informed the students that "During the last three weeks of the term, you will be joining with two or three other students to team teach in a class in the [local school district]. You will be responsible for planning and teaching two to three classes in your teams." In this course, rather than having the field experience come in the middle of the course to scaffold students' design of their own lessons, the students practiced their teaching and planning first and then applied them in their practicum.

In some experience-based courses, the pre-service teachers were required to work directly with either high school or college students. Some syllabi required a tutoring component in a college writing center, others required specific forms of classroom observation such as conducting case studies of secondary students or keeping observation logs of whole classrooms. On occasion students would be required to teach the classes they observed or grade the papers of the students. One

syllabus required students to write an essay contrasting the world of the classroom as represented in their course readings with that which they observed in the classrooms during their field experience.

Some experience-based courses made explicit references to state department documents, state assessment programs, state curriculum models, and other special considerations specific to the states in which the students would teach. In addition to being assigned to read such documents and occasionally being tested on them, some professors required students to prepare instruction that would help students pass state-mandated tests.

Students making field observations were at times required to conduct a study, often a case study of a particular student, in order to formalize and focus their observation methods. One syllabus had students

> Focus your observation on one student and try to observe everything that student does for the entire period. Be sure to select someone you can see clearly. In your write-up, try to describe what you could observe of this student's writing process. How much control does the student appear to have and how is this related to the structure of the class? What conclusions do you come to about this student's involvement with the class?

Other syllabi required a more intensive study, with repeated

observations of the student perhaps coupled with interviews and analysis of the student's writing.

Similarly, students might be required to study a student they were tutoring. One syllabus informed students that

> You will be required to tutor a student at the high school or college level in writing for at least one hour per week this semester. I will try to provide volunteers from my entry level classes, but the ultimately responsibility for finding a tutee is yours.
>
> Tutoring journal: You are responsible for turning in a tutoring journal every week. After each tutoring session, you should write about your impressions of the session--what happened and what you think and feel about it. I will also ask you to include specific things in your journal, such as your assessment of your tutee's writing problems. These journals may be handwritten (but in pen and legible please)--I expect at least 2-3 pages per week. You should save these journals as they will form part of the data base for your case study.

In this case, the journal served not just as a forum for thinking about the student but as the data base for a research project.

The thrust of an experience-based course was to tie the "best of all possible worlds" often found in textbooks with the

realities of the classroom. Instead of learning the pure form of a particular instructional approach as usually happened in workshops, students in experience-based courses were forced to encounter the pragmatics of implementing the approaches with real students, with their understanding of the relationship between theory and practice mediated by the relationships they were developing with the classroom teachers.

Reflective

A reflective course tended to involve students in consistent, formal reflection about the course readings, their own experiences as learners, and their own experiences in the course itself. Students in such classes typically kept a reading log (possibly a dialogue journal, with the respondent being a fellow student or the professor). Other typical assignments were to write a literacy autobiography, keep a portfolio of their classroom production, keep a log of classes that they observed, write a memoir of educational experiences, write an essay about a favorite teacher, engage in reading that stressed the value of reflection, complete an I-Search paper, create a file of materials from the media related to educational issues, and engage in other reflective activities. Students in reflective courses, while often engaged in practical activities such as designing lessons and units, were likely to have as their primary means of assessment written work in which they reflected on the implications of different approaches to teaching for student

learning.

Most of the courses that we identified as reflective required students to read materials that were either self-reflective themselves, such as Atwell's In the Middle; concerned observation-based reflection about how classrooms work, such as Perl and Wilson's Through Teachers' Eyes; or provided opportunities for students to reflect on the consequences of various beliefs about teaching, such as Gere, Fairbanks, Howe, Roop, and Schaafsma's Language and Reflection. Language and Reflection was often used in reflective courses to help pre-service teachers understand the assumptions that drive the four different approaches to teaching that Gere et al. identify: language as artifact, language as development, language as expression, and language as social construct. These positions overlap with the five perspectives we found represented in the course readings, although the labels are different. The authors present the four different approaches as sets of assumptions for readers to consider, rather than as positions to adopt. The purpose, rather than to get students to learn a particular approach to teaching, was to get students to think about the consequences of each approach and to make an informed decision about which approach they should use in their own teaching.

Reflective courses tended to be taught by reflective professors, something that was often apparent in the syllabus. One professor opened his syllabus with the following course

description:

I see our course as an opportunity to discuss important issues in the teaching of English--issues like creating multicultural curriculums, teaching basic writers, and leading student-centered conversations. Since my own pedagogy is centered on the assumption that people learn best through classroom conversations in which they can share their opinions and learn about others, you will find yourself invited to shape with me both what issues we discuss, and how we discuss them. You therefore should expect to occupy multiple positions in our classroom environment: not only that of student and learner, but also that of teacher and researcher. In this sense, I hope to model for you a method of sharing authority in the English classroom which you might consider when you construct your own teaching philosophy.

You won't find me giving out any final solutions to the issues we choose to study; however, I don't expect you to leave our classroom empty handed. By the end of the semester I hope that you will be able to articulate a coherent philosophy of teaching, name specific strategies that you will use in your student teaching, and possess several research questions which you hope to pursue in your first teaching situation.

The course description went on at length in the same vein, explaining the purpose of the course in terms of the professor's own articulated philosophy about the nature of teaching and learning. In his opening statement the professor modeled the type of reflection that he expected of his students.

Students themselves were often required to reflect in journals. One journal assignment told the students that

> A journal is informal by definition. Don't worry about spelling or other mechanical concerns. Just get your ideas down. What I'm looking for is a dialogue with you and a record of your thoughts and feelings as they develop and change. Feel free to ask me questions or direct comments my way. Don't feel you have to say what you think I want to hear. I'll read and evaluate them for content only. Honest. Grades will be based on effort and the thinking revealed.

The professor's priority was to get students to reflect rather than to adopt a particular pedagogy. This focus on getting students to understand and articulate their beliefs about teaching was a hallmark of courses we identified as reflective.

In reflective courses, the log often counted as a great portion of the student's grade. As one syllabus told the students,

> Because of the nature of this class and the emphasis on the reader response theory of literature study, the

response logs will constitute a major portion of the grade. Emphasis on the logs is not accidental; logs are considered to be a major emphasis of the course.

Some logs were "dialogue journals" that the professor or other students would respond to. One syllabus described the students' responsibility in the following way:

> The journal will be used in class as a way of establishing dialogue. Often, we will exchange journals for fifteen minutes of class time and write responses to one another's entries--in the manner of a written conversation. This will enable us to focus the oral discussion, and should also foster the interactive atmosphere which is so conducive to learning. NOTE: Please leave room in your notebook for response comments, either by double spacing or by using only one side of the paper. I keep a reading journal also, and will participate in these exchanges.
>
> The larger purpose for response journals is simply to enable readers the opportunity to think in writing about textual material. I will collect journals twice during the semester ... for response and evaluation. Students may use their journals during the final exam.

As this professor informed the students, their reflections provided the beginnings of larger dialogues and discussions about the course readings. The professor's own participation in the

process of exchanging journal entries for response would seem to reinforce the importance of the journal in the development of the class's understanding of the issues under study.

In addition, students were required to engage in more directed reflection through assignments such as writing a literacy autobiography, developing a personal teaching philosophy, writing about a favorite teacher, and otherwise thinking about the experiences that had shaped their own reading and writing development in order to get them to understand their own values and orientation. Students were then encouraged to share these reflections with other students to get a sense of the range of experience that diverse groups of students bring to a single classroom. Presumably such sharing and reflection would help make the pre-service teachers more aware of and sensitive to the backgrounds of the students they would eventually teach.

Engagement in reflective writing often provided an opportunity for students to participate in the processes they were being encouraged to use with their students. Typically, students would be given class time to respond to one another's reflective writing in peer response groups, and then given opportunities for revision or further writing. Reflective writing, then, seemed designed to serve two purposes: to encourage reflection on the part of the pre-service teachers themselves as they experienced the course, and to help give them procedures for running their own classes.

Students in reflective classes were often required to submit portfolios of their writing during the course. Portfolios often included a variety of in-process projects the students had worked on during the semester, perhaps including their journals, teaching units, reflective writing, classroom observations, and other writing and/or collected materials through which they had thought through the issues from the course. Some portfolios were miscellaneous collections of the various work from the semester, others required an organization. Some syllabi gave suggestions on how to use the portfolio for reflection and learning. One syllabus informed the students that "We will at times go back to earlier work for revision and similar activities, and keeping such folders will help you experience the benefit of having a writing portfolio. Although the writing we do in class is a means for investigating the nature of writing rather than an end in itself, you will probably find you want to go back over these writings and to save some of them after the course is over." The portfolio thus enabled students to keep a record of their various writing from the semester with the prospect of returning to it for further consideration and development, perhaps even after the formal conclusion of the methods class.

Portfolios came in two general types. One type of portfolio focused on getting students to consider themselves as writers. They were not required to include any of their formal teaching plans, but rather were required to keep the various drafts of the

more personal and reflective essays that they had worked on. The approach appeared to serve two purposes: to get pre-service teachers to become more reflective about their own writing, and to help them understand the benefits of such a process approach to writing so that they would be more likely to encourage it with their own students.

Another approach to portfolios was to have the writers present their reflections through an initial statement of purpose, a series of selected papers, and a final statement of direction. In such portfolios students were not demonstrating their own full exploration of the processes that had led them to their final written products, but selecting those products that best represented their learning from the semester. One syllabus required at the outset of the portfolio "An introduction in which you explain to your reader why you have selected certain items for inclusion and how you have organized your materials." The syllabus went on to specify certain requirements, such as a statement of teaching philosophy, an open-ended essay, a unit plan, and two responses to assignments from the semester, all culled from a larger range of writing produced during the semester. Students were then required to provide "A concluding statement in which you map out the questions you expect to explore as a student-teacher and how you might go about researching those questions." The portfolio, therefore, served not only as a collection of work selected by the students as

representative of what they had learned, but also as a framework and catalyst for an inquiry central to their teaching.

Reflective courses, then, focused on getting students to think about their own learning experiences and considering the impact of particular teaching approaches on students. Although they tended to offer students possibilities to consider rather than teaching approaches to adopt, they did stress the value of reflective writing in such a way that it probably emerged as a pedagogical principle. Still, in most course assessments the thrust was on the quality of reflection, rather than on the implementation of a particular teaching approach.

Theoretical

A theoretical course attempted to involve students in the consideration of theoretical positions that drive classroom practice. The emphasis was on the theory rather than the practice. Thus, rather than being assessed primarily on the design of writing lesson plans and instructional units, students might write a series of essays considering the theoretical positions covered in the class. Our identification of a course as theoretical resulted from the extent to which a course assessed students according to their ability to articulate theory relative to their ability to design instruction. One syllabus that we labeled as theoretical identified as its course goals:

> [This class] is designed to provide preservice teachers of English, speech, and theater with background on

current theory and practice relevant to the teaching of their discipline to secondary school students. The course has four pragmatic objectives: (1) to help students plan and present lessons and units; (2) to assist students in evaluating student progress; (3) to enable students to define and defend informed positions on significant issues in the teaching of language, writing, literature, speech, theater, and mass media; and (4) to provide students with an understanding of multicultural and exceptional student issues relevant to the teaching of English, speech, and theater.

We should stress again that our classification of a course as primarily theoretical did not mean that it did not include practical instruction in teaching or reflection in journals or logs. Rather, we labeled courses as theoretical when students were required as their primary means of assessment to state the theoretical underpinnings of instructional methods.

Theoretical courses did not rely on general textbooks as were often used in surveys, workshops, and experience-based courses but instead used texts that presented theoretical approaches to thinking about teaching, often supplementing them with articles and chapters collected in a course packet. Books with extensive attention to theory, usually written for college-level instruction (i.e., Lindemann's A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers), were often required reading for students of

theoretical courses, in contrast to the more practice-heavy books required in other types of courses.

Students in theoretical courses, as noted, might be required to develop lesson plans and units. We found that the development of pedagogy was not the central means of assessment in theoretical courses. Students were involved more in writing research reports, developing "projects" that incorporated reports on articles from scholarly journals, writing papers on theoretical issues, and taking exams that involved essay questions.

The papers written for theoretical courses tended to be open-topic. One syllabus required "Three short but more formal papers addressing issues in the teaching of writing, language, and literature." Students might write a 5-10 page paper on Rosenblatt's transactional theory of the literary work, on cooperative learning, on whole language, or on some other topic that had been stimulated by either their reading for the course or their encounters during field experience. Again, the focus was on articulating the theory, rather than on designing classroom lessons and activities that put the theory into practice.

Discussion

Our analysis of the syllabi from universities across the country has identified five basic ways in which to organize a secondary English teaching methods course. We should stress

again that while we found a number of courses that matched the composite descriptions fairly closely, many courses included elements of several types of organization. From our analysis we would draw two general conclusions.

The first conclusion concerns the prevalence of the survey course, which we judged to have the least potential for teaching the process-oriented approaches to learning that were central to the pedagogy espoused by the overwhelming majority of texts assigned in the courses. Survey courses tended to limit the possibilities of engaging in extended learning processes, instead marching students briskly through a broad range of topics and issues without analyzing them in depth or working recursively to synthesize knowledge from the various sessions. Assessment, following the overall course design, tended to be packaged in small compartments, again mitigating against the likelihood of having a strong comprehensive understanding the relationship among issues. In reading the syllabi and reflecting on the theories currently informing instructional practice, we were struck by the inconsistency between the learning modeled in survey courses and the learning advocated in the textbooks. We feel that, as the architect Mies Van Der Rohe asserted, "less is more" in the planning of a methods class. In other words, rather than trying to survey the field a methods course should choose a focus and explore it in depth. If this report can accomplish one goal, we hope it would be to present the other four alternatives

we have found as more attractive ways of teaching the methods course.

The second conclusion concerns the way to "best" teach the methods course. Of the four alternatives to the survey, we find that each has particular strengths, none of which recommends it exclusively over the others. Indeed, the most sensible recommendation we can come up with is that a "best" methods class is theoretically informed, involves students in some sort of pragmatic teaching experiences, provides a workshop atmosphere, and requires students to reflect on their own experiences as learners and on the consequences of various teaching approaches. The precise balance among these considerations will vary from context to context, depending on the disposition and experiences of the professor, the programmatic and institutional constraints of the university, the cooperation and needs of the local school systems, the mandates of the state, orientation of the students, and other local factors. Our conclusion to our report, then, is not so much to argue a "best" approach to teaching the methods class but to provide a set of models which professors of secondary English methods courses can consider in order to make informed decisions about how to best run their own classes.

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